

RESPIRATOR PROGRAM FOR THE RI DEM OFFICE OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Office of Emergency Response emphasizes the importance of training, field experience, protective equipment, and professional judgement in assuring the safety and health of personnel.

At a minimum, whatever the circumstances:

- All employees must comply with the health and safety policies of the RI DEM. Policies are outlined in RI DEM's *Emergency Response Site Safety and Health Plan* and *Respirator Policy and Program*.
- Investigate site before entering to identify potential hazards. Beware of first responders' reports or other evidence of foul odors or respiratory irritations.
- No one should enter the site of an incident without a determination that it is safe to do so: "If you don't know, don't go."

As stipulated in DEM policies, the following is a list of situations that are apt to require DEM Emergency Responders to use a respirator. The list is intended to help responders anticipate hazards and appropriate protection procedures. Responders should begin with the highest level of protection that might be required, immediately begin monitoring potential hazards, and downgrade the level of personal protection as appropriate.

POISONOUS INHALATION HAZARDS

Anticipated Hazard: Annealing gases, chlorine, phosphine, phosgene, arsene.

Likely Location: Jewelry factory or shop, water plant, waste water treatment facility, semi-conductor factory.

Minimum Initial Protection: Level A

FLAMMABLE SOLVENTS

Anticipated Hazard: Toluene, xylene, acetone, methylethylketone.

Likely Location: Auto body shop, paint shop, jewelry factory or shop.

Minimum Initial Protection: Level B

CHLORINATED SOLVENTS

Anticipated Hazard: Perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene

Likely Location: Dry cleaner, degreasing operation.

Minimum Initial Protection: Level C

LACK OF OXYGEN

Anticipated Hazard: Oxygen concentration below 19.5%

Likely Location: Dumpster, manhole, tank, tank truck, confined space.

Minimum Initial Protection: Level A

AIRBORNE PARTICULATES

Anticipated Hazard: Dust, powder, asbestos, lead.

Likely Location: Grinding, sanding, or mixing operations.

Minimum Initial Protection: Level C

BIOLOGICAL AGENTS

Anticipated Hazard: Infectious pathogen or WMD

Likely Location: WMD site, animal manure, bird droppings, decaying flesh

Minimum Initial Protection: Level B

FIRES

Anticipated Hazard: Airborne toxins and particulate.

Location: Brush or structural fire, metal recycling plant.

Minimum Initial Protection: Level C